

THE OCCULT WAY

PART II

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by
P. G. BOWEN

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Author of The Sayings of the Ancient One

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FOREWORD

Instead of Notes, which are a usual and indeed a necessary accompaniment to lessons such as those given in Part I of this book, I give in the lessons that follow some questions asked by Learners, and my own answers thereto. The questions are not inventions of my own, but are selections from a volume of queries actually propounded by students who have heard the subject matter of the various lessons expounded by me in lectures, or have had private correspondence with me concerning it.

The questions I have chosen to answer here have been selected for two reasons: first, because a majority of students appear to be interested in the points upon which they bear, and second, because the answers they evoke serve in some measure to fill up the wider gaps which the lessons inevitably contain.

To fill all gaps in teachings such as I have given would naturally be impossible, and even if possible would not be desirable. To give just enough leading to induce in the Learner a desire to travel for himself is always my aim, not to give him so much as to cause him to feel that effort of his own is unnecessary.

Each question in each of the lessons which follow is designated by a *letter*(Question A, Question B, etc.), and relates to the passage or paragraph similarly marked in the lesson in Part I to which that in Part II corresponds.

Each lesson in Part II relates to a lesson of corresponding number in Part I.

P. G. B.

THE LEARNER'S QUESTIONS — Lesson I

Question A: You quote H. P. Blavatsky, the founder of the Theosophical Movement: do you regard Theosophy as identical with Occultism?

Answer: Theosophy, in its original meaning of Divine Wisdom and the pursuit thereof, was identical with Occultism, but nowadays that meaning has been wholly lost, and no two Theosophists of different societies, or even of the same society, would define the term in the same way, if they attempted a definition at all. It is best to regard it simply as a system of Philosophy and Ethics of a nature not very clearly defined. Occultism, on the other hand, has been defined by H. P. Blavatsky herself as the Science of Life, leading on to mastery of the Art of Living. In other words it is a definite Science, upon which the practical work of hastening the evolution of Consciousness is based.

H. P. Blavatsky drew a sharp distinction between Occultism and Theosophy. In a remarkable article in her magazine *Lucifer*, entitled "Practical Occultism", she makes it clear to any reader of intelligence that a Theosophist at his best guides his life by *human*, albeit very lofty, standards, whereas an Occultist orders his according to *universal law*.

Every Learner should study Madame Blavatsky's article, which, together with another of equal importance entitled "Occultism v. the Occult Arts", is obtainable in booklet form.

Question A (subsidiary): Would it help a Beginner not quite ready to become a Learner to join a Theosophical society?

Answer: One cannot say authoritatively what, in the way of experience, may be helpful to a Beginner. My opinion is that it is always best to remain detached from any association to which the suspicion of sectarianism attaches. It should be remembered that there are at least three large societies each claiming to be The Theosophical Society (the society founded by H. P. Blavatsky), and almost innumerable minor organizations, all calling themselves Theosophical. Each, by the simple fact of its existence, proclaims all others defective in some way; in other words, not upholders of true Theosophy. It does not, therefore, appear to me that there is any real difference between joining a Theosophical society and becoming a member of a particular Christian sect.

It will be understood, of course, that in saying this I am not in any way condemning any of those societies or Churches. Each and every one of them serves a section of humanity in the only way it can be served in its existing phase of evolution. I speak only of their

possible use to the potential Occultist.

Question A (subsidiary): Is it not a fact that many, if not all, Theosophical societies have within them inner, esoteric, or occult schools; and do not these give occult training?

Answer: Many do possess such schools, but as to whether any of them give genuine occult training, I cannot say. As far as my own experience of them goes, I cannot say that I have found any that are in a true sense occult, or that give training in true Occultism.

Question A (subsidiary): Do you not think that the Masters or adept Teachers who guided the Theosophical Movement in its early days still guide it?

Answer: That question is a source of controversy among Theosophists themselves. Knowledge of Cyclic law compels me into the belief that the guidance you speak of was withdrawn three or four years prior to the end of last century. The writings of Madame Blavatsky, and of her Teachers on the question, as I understand them, fully confirm the belief which my independent studies have given me.

Question A (subsidiary): Do you consider that Madame Blavatsky's Teachers were Masters, or perfected men?

Answer: Their own letters are quite explicit in regard to their status. In those letters they state unequivocally that they were adepts of lesser degree — certainly not "perfected" men.

Here I would point out something not understood, or at least forgotten by the majority of would-be Occultists and Theosophists, namely that to the student it is of no moment whatsoever whether or not the Inspirers of the Theosophical Movement, and modern Occultism, are still in direct contact with any society, or whether or not they are perfected men. It is by virtue of what he is himself that the Learner profits, not because of the character of his school or of its Leader. A dunce may become a member of a class led by a master mathematician, but doing so will never make him a Senior Wrangler. I advise all who would be true learners to cease to concern themselves about "Masters" and inspired "schools", and concentrate upon such work as is taught in the seven lessons. If we want guidance from Master Teachers we already have it in such books as *Light on the Path* and *The Bhagavad Gita*.

Question B: Do you accept the doctrine of *Reincarnation*?

Answer: I might with equal truth answer either YES or NO to that question: everything depends upon how the term Reincarnation is understood. I do not accept that man is a spiritual *entity* of a permanent, unchanging nature, which periodically assumes a human body in order

to have earth experiences and periodically relinquishes it in order to assimilate the results of those experiences. The Law of Everbecoming makes it impossible that any such permanent Being should exist. Whatever reincarnates must, logically and philosophically, be fixed and unchanging in its own essential nature, and the sole, fixed, changeless principle in man is his simple *Consciousness of Being*, namely the Free Self which he expresses when he uses the words "I AM". That *Consciousness of Being* is common to all mankind, and to all Self-conscious Life. It identifies itself with, or reflects itself in, an endless procession of forms, or limitations of Universal BEING, or LIFE, and that identification is the only "reincarnation" that is or that can possibly be. Reincarnation is simply *re-identification* of the Universal CONSCIOUSNESS, which exhibits itself as Self in man, with successive phases of EVERBECOMING LIFE. Man has no permanent "Ego" peculiar to himself, but he has a permanent Ego which he shares with all Self-conscious Life. Study of the doctrine of Gautama Buddha, the most elevated Teacher to which our human race has given birth, will confirm what I say.

Question B (subsidiary): In the absence of any permanent Being, how is it possible to have any memory of past lives?

Answer: LIFE is infinite and eternal, and therefore no aspect of it can exist that has not pre-existed from *no-beginning*; and no aspect exists that will not continue to exist eternally. Man in his Becoming quits consciousness of one phase or aspect of LIFE for another, but that which is left is not destroyed, but continues to exist eternally, and may be again recovered, partially or wholly, by any Self capable of freeing itself from immediate limitations. Such recovery, or partial re-identification of "I" with past phases of Being, is always being done, and constitutes ordinary memory. Between it and memory of remote phases of Being, which we call past lives, there is no essential difference, other than that the latter demands that the Self be freed from present limitation much more completely.

The common, natural, and indeed inevitable error in endeavouring to understand these matters lies in thinking that it is the present *Being* of the man — the phase of Becoming with which the Self is momentarily identified — that has had those past experiences, whereas the truth is that they have been had by the changeless SELF which is common to all men and to all higher Life.

Past phases re-embraced by the Consciousness, wholly or partially, become part of present Being, conditioning it as an instrument of experience, in one way or another.

KARMA, the doctrine which is invariably associated with that of Reincarnation, is also but another name for the Law of Everbecoming. Of all so-called "Laws", Karma, which teaches that whatever is arises from what was, and will give rise to that which is to be, is the most perfect means of instilling into ordinary human minds the reality of Everbecoming; and for this reason, no doubt, the Buddha, the Supreme Master, made it the centre of his whole system. Unfortunately, it is generally grossly misunderstood, and understanding concerning it has been inextricably confused by pronouncements upon it made by persons quite ignorant of its real nature.

New presentations of old "laws", such as these which I have outlined, are useful aids towards freeing the Self, but care must be taken not to allow them to lead you but from one trap into another. Realization that reincarnation, as commonly conceived, does not exist, may lead some into the error of thinking that man has no future life to consider. Man is LIFE manifest, and therefore exists eternally.

THE LEARNER'S QUESTIONS — Lesson II

Question A: How do you reconcile your teaching that one should *Desire to be Everbecoming*, and have *interest* in the work, with H. P. Blavatsky's teaching in the *Voice of the Silence*, which commands the Disciple to "Desire nothing"?

Answer: No reconciliation is required. It is only those of no intelligence, who anchor themselves to the dead letter of "H.P.B.'s" teachings, just as Puritans tie themselves to the letter of the Bible, who could see any contradiction between the *Voice of the Silence* and what I teach. To desire to be Everbecoming precludes manifestation of separative desires, and it is obviously against those that the *V.O.S.* warns. Were it possible to eliminate the Desire Principle from man's constitution it would mean absolute passivity for him — equivalent to extinction, for Desire is simply a manifestation of the universal ENERGY element of LIFE.

Question B: What is the real nature of Nirvana and Avitchi?

Answer: Any attempt by a human being to define Nirvana would be an obvious absurdity, or evidence of presumptuous ignorance, for from that state no human Self ever has or ever could return into this world; but by consideration of the implications of the analogy furnished in the text of the lesson some relative conception of the Nirvanic consciousness may be formed. It is said:

"The more efficient a servant self is, the less does it obtrude its existence upon the attention of the Master Self, until when perfect in its

task it ceases to be known at all, and though still acting individually becomes virtually identical with its creator.”

Arguing from this analogy it may be conceived that a man who has become perfect in all his duties towards the world ceases to have any individual manifestation in the world, and becomes one with Universal LIFE. He has vanished from the world, the Sphere of Action which is his; yet all his functions relative to that Sphere continue to be performed perfectly. Are they now executed by LIFE itself? No, for LIFE is infinite and the Sphere is finite: *they are executed by an aspect of LIFE identical with the Man who is not.*

Avitchi is a condition the nature of which may also be deduced from the analogy furnished in the text. A Being that is consistently rebellious and intractable must, under the Law of Everbecoming, ultimately be ejected from the Sphere of the evolving Self of the World, and have its place filled by a new aspect of that Self, which in due time becomes educated into individual efficiency. But the Being that is ejected, is it destroyed? It cannot be, for nothing that is can ever be destroyed. It exists in some other Sphere — or rather in a Nirvanic state relative to a Sphere belonging to a lower round of the Great Spiral Path to the Infinite. Out of this thinking another thought may arise, namely that it is conceivable that there are Beings which would elect to ”reign in Hell” rather than to ”serve in Heaven”. It is not wise, however, for a Learner to speculate much along these lines.

Question C: If circumstances make it impossible to give freedom to a clamorous lower self, what course would you suggest?

Answer: What you hypothesize is an impossibility in the case of a genuine *Learner*. But assuming that one is possessed by a self such as you describe, that self is obviously the Central, or ruling, Self of the Being, and is the slave of its *Conditions*. Escape from the thrall of Conditions is secured by balancing one against another the powers of the positive and negative ”Monitors” . In this case certain Monitors attract towards positive expression of a particular kind, but certain others – those that delimit the field of Natural Duty – call in the opposite direction. If the latter are not strong enough to overcome the power of the former, the result is what is called ”anti-social” conduct of one kind or another, obviously impossible for a true Learner.

Let me repeat what was said, or at least suggested, in earlier lessons, that Occultism has no panaceas for the troubles that burden the average man. The way to peace may be laid before him, but he has neither understanding to perceive it nor power to apply the rules that appertain to it. But it is also well to remember that the average good

man, though he feels the lure of desires he cannot gratify, nevertheless balances their attraction by realization of duty, and this without any knowledge of occult laws. It is not the province of one like myself, who strives to teach Learners, to attempt to prescribe for the ills of non-Learners; but the Learner himself who has gained some sound understanding of the lessons I have given may do much to help others less instructed than himself.

THE LEARNER'S QUESTIONS — Lesson III

Question A: H. P. Blavatsky and other authorities teach that it is MOTIVE, and motive alone, that makes any action beneficent or maleficent, yet you say it is true that "the road to Hell is paved with good intentions". Is there no contradiction here involved?

Answer: There is no contradiction. Motive and Intention are not synonyms. Motive is the actual root-power behind any outward manifestation of Self – it is, in fact, but another name for the Energy aspect of a particular self whose true nature is seldom known. Intention is merely the illusionary appearance which that hidden self reflects into consciousness. H. P. Blavatsky roundly condemned the actions of certain medical researchers who experimented with hypnotism, and declared that they were unconscious Black Magicians, yet it is impossible to doubt that those men were well-intentioned in the highest degree. Other advanced teachers, notably Anna Kingsford, condemned, even positively *hated*, men who practised vivisection. Yet no one capable of truly detached observation and thinking could imagine for a moment that those "vivisectionists and hypnotizers" were animated by any intentions other than to discover cures for human ills. *If* therefore their actions were evil, savouring of Black Magic, productive of a terrible Karma, it meant that the real motive was hidden behind the "Veil of Self", and that the possessor was entirely unaware of its nature. Anna Kingsford, it is alleged by her biographer, strove to kill by magical means certain vivisectionists, and such an act is unquestionably one of Black Magic, yet none who know her life and teachings could suspect her of any but the loftiest *intentions*. Personally, I doubt the accuracy of her biographer, and have strong reasons for doubting that he had any of the intimate knowledge concerning her that he claimed.

Question B: Do you not recognize any pledge as absolutely binding?

Answer: It is a fundamental truth in Occultism that "each man is his own absolute Law-giver, the bestower of glory or gloom upon himself; the creator of his life, his reward, and punishment". The Learner or

Disciple cannot pledge himself to anything other than to his own Higher Self, and that Self eternally retreats into wider wisdom. The wisdom which now binds is absorbed in the wider wisdom of tomorrow, which may loose. The Occultist is not bound by human law or human oaths — *but this does not mean that he needs to break a human law or a human pledge in order to demonstrate his freedom.*

Question B (subsidiary): But in the case of a pledge to keep occult teachings secret, which is always given to the Higher Self, would you not hold it binding?

Answer: The foregoing answer applies here also. The Higher Self is the guide. Such pledges are not imposed by the Higher Self, but by man and man-made institutions, and have no more real meaning than any other promise unwisely given. The fact that they are imposed proves that neither "School" nor "Teacher" is truly *occult*. A true occult teacher accepts responsibility for the acts of his pupil, whom he has *selected*, because he has seen in him potentialities of wisdom. He will warn him against the unwisdom of attempting to convey to the uninstructed knowledge they are unable to grasp, and can only corrupt to their own injury and to that of the world and the Occult Work itself; but he will not impose upon his pupil any irrevocably binding pledges. There is no need to do so, for genuine occult secrets are essentially incommunicable. The idea, encouraged by certain Esoteric Schools, that higher Disciples and Adepts are actually oath-bound, is false and absurd. *Such men know that they are always bound by the Law of Life, and that their backslidings and unwisdom will bring upon them its due results.*

Question B (subsidiary): Are there no known esoteric schools open to Beginners, which would help them to prepare themselves for more advanced training?

Answer: There are multitudes of so-called esoteric and occult schools and orders which accept Beginners, and many others who are not in any true sense Beginners upon the Occult Way. More than that, those organizations even *invite* and offer students *inducements* to enter them, a fact that in itself proves that they are in no real sense occult. Inasmuch as true Occultism is concerned (I do not speak about Occult Arts), none of these schools can teach more than that which is given freely in the seven lessons. Very few teach as much.

THE LEARNER'S QUESTIONS — Lesson IV

Question A: How is man related, if related at all, to those Beings commonly called fairies, or elementals, and angels or devas?

Answer: In exactly the same way as the middle steps of a ladder are related to the lower and the higher steps. Elemental, mineral, vegetable, animal, human, angel, god — all these are but names for ascending phases of Everbecoming Life.

Question A (subsidiary): You do not, then, accept the Theosophical doctrine that "fairies" and "devas" belong to a different — a *parallel* — stream of evolution to that which man pursues, and therefore never pass through the human phase?

Answer: Such doctrine, if Theosophical, is certainly not that which H. P. Blavatsky teaches. She states in her *Secret Doctrine* that every Being in the Universe either once was or is now preparing to become a man. The teaching to which you refer, unless it means other than appears, is obviously unphilosophical, and not in accord with the occult doctrine, which H. P. Blavatsky taught, of the Consciousness Principle of Life becoming veiled in Substance and then rising out of it through infinite gradations of BEING into wider and wider states of Self-consciousness. If there are orders of Beings that never pass through the human phase, then it is necessary to assume that their evolution never brings them Self-awareness, for the human state simply means that state of Everbecoming wherein individual Consciousness of Being dawns. I suggest that those interested in this question should carefully study the SUMMING UP to Volume I of H. P. Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*.

Question A (subsidiary): Your teaching would appear to deny the existence of *Archetypes* — that is to say ideal, permanently existing Divine Counterparts of all phenomenally manifesting Beings?

Answer: The question is difficult to answer because it is by no means clear what the conception is which those who subscribe to the doctrine of Archetypes really hold. As you state it (which may not be correctly), it would mean that every Being in the universe pursues its own separate line of evolution, towards union with its Archetype: in other words that which is now a flower would ultimately become aware of itself as a Divinely ideal flower, and the same with man or angel. That, if it is what the doctrine implies, is merely an exaggeration of the idea of parallel lines of evolution, and is certainly not the Occult Doctrine as taught in Esoteric (or Mahayana) Buddhism, the Upanishads, the Qabalah, the Hermetic teachings, or Blavatskian Theosophy.

Question B: What are the implications of the teaching that the stream of Negative Energy bearing results from positive outgoing rises, or goes inward beyond the sphere of the human Self?

Answer: The implications are many, but most important among them is

that much more than Self is affected by any action. Beings that evolve on higher than human planes experience from human actions results which pass beyond the Sphere of Consciousness of the actor; and so also do embryonic aspects of the human Self. Beginners on the Occult Way should strive to understand that though their struggles and apparent failures bring little or no light of real knowledge into consciousness, nevertheless highly important effects from those experiences may be arising behind the "Veil of Self" — effects which one day may emerge as a sudden illumination.

Question C: You insist that realization of duty to wife and family is a highly important balancing force, yet H. P. Blavatsky taught that even love of wife and family is a bar to real occultism: can you explain the contradiction?

Answer: There is no contradiction, because different conditions are in question. "H.P.B." speaks of the common human love of wife and child which makes the man selfish on their behalf. I speak of *realization of duty* in the particular Sphere of Action of which wife and child are chief landmarks. But it must also be understood that "H.P.B." spoke of *real* occultism – Discipleship, in fact – whereas I speak to the Learner just beginning to move towards Discipleship. Her intention, in the article where she gave the teaching quoted, is to bring home to ignorant students some understanding of the fact that they are wholly unprepared for a genuine occult effort. My aim in these lessons is to lead Beginners to prepare themselves for Discipleship, which may not come in this life.

THE LEARNER'S QUESTIONS — Lesson V

Question A: Should not symbolic or ritual dancing have equal place with poetry, music, and art as an instrument of Invocation?

Answer: No. Such dances are unsafe for the Learner. Certainly they form an instrument, both of Invocation and Evocation, but more particularly of the latter. In dancing the "Lord" of Number predominates excessively, and the law is that where any single Hierarchy so predominates it tends to possess the Self and carry it *outward* into objective activity — into sensuous, if not sensual, expression, in fact. The Learner is most earnestly advised, if he attempts Invocation or Evocation, to confine himself strictly to the Instruments mentioned in the lessons.

Question A (subsidiary): Which, if any, of the "Guardian Lords" rule in *Scent*, which is a common adjunct of ceremonial?

Answer: Scent, flavour, touch are neither of them governed directly by

the "Guardian Lords", but by lesser Hierarchies which may be regarded as *emanations* of the greater. The Ruling "Lord" of Scent has Colour for his Overlord, with Sound only slightly less dominant.

Question B: Is there any correspondence between the Guardian Lords and the so-called Elements, Earth, Water, Air, Fire?

Answer: The influence of all four "Lords" is present in each Element: *Idea* rules Earth; *Number* rules Water; *Sound* rules Air; *Colour* rules Fire.

Question C: What is the occult view of the Bible?

Answer: I cannot answer for Occultism in general, but only for the Occult Body with which I myself am associated, which, however, because centred in the regions whence the Bible sprang, is likely to be fairly well informed on the subject.

The Bible is made up of fragments of Occult teachings, Invocatory and Evocatory chants and poems, Mystery Stories and Dramas – all derived by the Hebrews from the Mystery schools of Egypt and Chaldea, but principally from the latter during the Babylonian captivity, when many young men became disciples of, and even Initiates of, the Mysteries – and all interwoven with Jewish tribal legends and semi-historical narrative. The New Testament is not, of course, part of the Hebrew Scriptures at all. The central figure was a great Teacher – perhaps what in India would be called an Avatar – who lived, and gave the distinctive teachings associated with the name of Jesus, in the Greco-Roman world of the Middle East, perhaps a century or more prior to the time in which he is popularly supposed to have lived. The Gospel narrative is in no sense historical. It is most definitely portion of a Mystery Drama illustrating the life, progress, and apotheosis of a candidate in the Greater Mysteries, with which is interwoven much of the actual teachings of the Teacher, together with many interpolations by later scribes and interpreters. Paul, the real founder of Christianity, was unquestionably an Initiate of the Mysteries. His success in Asia Minor and Greece was clearly due to the fact that he taught no new doctrine, but simply purged the ancient Mystery doctrine of the corruptions, which by that date had come upon it, and made Jesus its central figure, in place of one of the earlier deities.

Question D: Who and what is the Being of which you speak "whose nature is all-embracing and omnipresent in our world"?

Answer: I speak of the Spiritual Being of our planet. Some would, perhaps, call it the "Planetary Logos". It is of three aspects, Father, Mother, and Son. The "Father" aspect is composed of the

Consciousness, and the Energy elements of our world, and is emanated by the Planetary Spirit, described in Lesson VII, and called the MASTER. NATURE is the "Mother". The *evolving* Self of our planet is the "Son". Strictly speaking, it is to this "Son" that the term "Logos" should apply; but obviously, also, the "Son" partakes of the "Father" and the "Mother" nature besides being himself.

Here it is well to make clear that in what I say of the "Logos", or of any other metaphysical doctrine which is the subject of controversy, I am neither laying down a law nor dogmatically declaring that thus and thus only should the occult doctrine be interpreted. In all instances I give either my own intuitional interpretations or else the teachings of the school with which I am associated. Neither this school nor myself wish in any way to impose a special doctrine on the world or to challenge the truth of doctrines favoured by others.

THE LEARNER'S QUESTIONS — Lesson VI

Question A: From whence derive the various quotations which you attribute to the ancient Masters?

Answer: All unacknowledged quotations in this book, and all attributed in a general way to "the Hermetic Masters", etc., are taken from the ancient Scripture from which the teachings translated in my book, *The Sayings of the Ancient One*, are also taken. This Scripture is the principal study of members of the school with which I am associated.

Question B: ON PHYSICAL TRAINING.

Answer: I will consider the attention and training which the body should receive under the following headings:

(1) Exercise. (2) Food and Drink. (3) Bathing. (4) Sleep. (5) Clothing. (6) Sex.

(1) *Exercise.*

I consider exercise under the following heads: (a) For establishing BALANCE of body. (b) Correct breathing. (c) Correct walking. (d) Walking and breathing. (e) General exercises. (f) Special breathing.

(a) *Balance.* — Balance of Being is the Key to command of Being, and so also is balance of body the key to command of the bodily instrument. The method of securing it is simple in the extreme, but if the Learner suffers from any of the disabilities mentioned in Lesson VI it may be difficult if not impossible to apply.

Let the eyes look straight forward at exactly their own level, neither turned upward, as they are when the head is inclined forward, nor downward, as they are when the head is thrown back and the chin

elevated; let the thought centre itself in the nape of the neck, and let this point be *pressed back* as though against resistance. If these simple requirements are fully carried out the whole body will inevitably fall into an erect and balanced posture, whether one is sitting or standing. Apart from position of the eyes and nape of neck it is unnecessary to think of the body at all. There should be no bracing of the shoulders, no protrusion of the chest, and no retraction of the abdomen. On the contrary, the muscles of all those parts, especially of abdomen and waist, should be relaxed as much as possible.

With a little patient practice the position of eyes and neck will become habitual, and thereafter thought can be wholly withdrawn from the body.

It is obvious that this adjustment of balance, simple though it is, may be impossible to a person afflicted with any disease or deformity of the spine, or to a middle-aged person whose muscles have become stiffened in bad postures. Nevertheless persons so afflicted cannot injure themselves, and indeed may benefit themselves very considerably, by patient attempts to act as directed.

(b) *Breathing*. — To be able to breathe fully, deeply, and regularly, without effort, is a necessity to true health. No attempt at deep breathing should ever be made until habitual balance of body has been established.

To breathe correctly, sit or stand in the *Balanced Posture*. Let the breath *flow* into the body without effort or strain. Let the relaxed waist and abdomen expand first, then the diaphragm and ribs, and lastly the upper chest. The moment you become conscious that an effort is required, if more air is to be inhaled, exhale in the same effortless way, letting the upper chest sink down, the ribs fall inward, and the abdomen retract.

If you are a woman the diaphragm and ribs will be the first to expand, and the expansion of the upper chest will be greater than in a man.

Practise this breathing systematically for five or ten minutes every morning and for the same period at night. Practise it also whenever opportunity permits.

(c) *Walking*. — Walking is the commonest of human actions, yet rarely is it performed efficiently by civilized man, mainly because his body is unbalanced. If the rules of Balance are observed when walking as well as when sitting or standing it will not be difficult to walk correctly. Pay attention, also, to the following points:

Remember that walking is a forward motion of the *whole* body.

Propulsion is received from the *rearmost* leg and foot, which thrusts the body forward. The other leg should swing forward with the moving body, and the foot should come to the ground with the body still balanced over it. Reaching forward with the moving leg beyond the centre of gravity of the body induces fatigue and unbalance, for the body is transformed into a dead weight which has to be *dragged* forward by a secondary muscular effort of the leading leg.

Do not try to walk at a pace greater than is natural to you. Length of stride depends on length of limb, and upon the power of the thrust given by the rear leg and foot. Utilization of the calf muscles to raise the heel and bring the weight on to the ball of the foot and toes will lengthen the stride more effectively and with less fatigue than will reaching forward with the moving limb. The degree of rapidity with which the limbs are moved depends upon the character of the nervous, not upon that of the muscular, system.

(d) *Walking and Breathing Exercise*. — The following exercise is the most important *sensitizer* and *purifyer* within reach of the Learner. Correct balance, mode of breathing, and mode of walking must be established before its practice is begun.

Find your most comfortable walking pace — probably between two and four miles per hour: over four miles per hour would imply an unusually athletic physique, and under two some defect or abnormality. Now inhale fully and deeply in the manner outlined while taking a certain number of steps, and exhale again fully while taking an equal number of steps. Be careful not to strain in any way, either by attempting to inhale an excessive amount of air or by taking too many steps to each breath. For a man of good physique four steps to each inhalation, and the same to each exhalation, in early attempts at this exercise, rising to six or eight when well practised, may be regarded as the standard; but each individual must make his or her own rule.

When the practice is first attempted, rest, when you have covered half a mile, by changing the pace to a gentle stroll, and breathing normally. As you become habituated to the practice the rhythmic breathing can be continued throughout the whole of your walking exercise for an hour, or two hours, or more. In addition to that you should aim at establishing a habit of breathing in this manner whenever you walk abroad. Aim also at filling the lungs more and more completely at each inhalation, and emptying them more and more thoroughly at each exhalation; but always take care that the work is done without strain.

This exercise burns up and expels impurities from the body

more effectively than any other known practice. For this reason it not only ensures against disease but it may be the means of eradicating chronic, constitutional complaints of many kinds. Here I teach it simply as a means of purifying and sensitizing the body, and mention its other benefits only for the possible helping of many who suffer from ill health. It has but one disadvantage, namely that it requires pure air and a place not frequented by crowds for its practice, and is therefore not so readily available to those who live in large cities.

(e) General Exercises. — If it were possible for the Learner to devote two to four hours per day to the foregoing practice he would not, if he lived also in the manner to be described later, need any additional exercise. But the vast majority of Learners have no such time at their disposal as is needed, and must therefore find other means of giving their bodies the exercise it requires.

Of systems of physical culture for daily use in the home the number is legion, but of that number few, if any, fill the needs of the Aspirant to Discipleship. The Neophyte seeks a pure, sensitive, poised physical instrument, not large muscles and great strength. Whatever system he follows must to a considerable extent be artificial, but one modelled as nearly as possible upon the activities of the untutored child is the ideal.

I cannot here undertake the task of formulating an ideal system of home exercises, for that could not be done effectively except by the aid of numerous photographic illustrations; and I must therefore content myself with suggesting a reasonably efficient substitute, as follows:

Get yourself a manual of Free Gymnastics — the manual of Physical Training as used in the Army is the most useful. From among the exercises given select two simple neck exercises, two leg exercises, one arm exercise, two hip exercises, one shoulder exercise, two waist exercises, two abdominal exercises, two back exercises. Let your selections all be simple natural movements — bending and stretching of the trunk, bending, stretching, extending, and lowering of the limbs. On rising each morning go through these fourteen exercises in the order set forth: (1, neck; 2, legs; 3, arms; 4, hips; 5, shoulders; 6, waist; 7, abdomen; 8, back).

There is an importance — not understood, as far as I am aware, by any of the exponents of physical culture methods — in exercising, as described, from the extremities of the body inward to the centre.

Perform each exercise until the first suspicion of fatigue in the parts affected becomes perceptible. Endeavour to breathe rhythmically

while exercising, inhaling with the raising or stretching movement and exhaling with the reverse.

It is best to exercise unclothed, or at least clad only in night attire. Wear thick woollen socks, or warm bedroom slippers.

Having finished the exercises, remove clothing (if worn). Dip palms of hands in cold water and rub quickly over the entire body, from extremities to centre, omitting no part whatsoever. Dry rapidly with towel.

This work should not occupy more than twenty to thirty minutes.

Before retiring at night perform the special "Body-rubbing" exercises to be found in the little book entitled *My System*, by Lieutenant Muller; but instead of doing the rubbing with dry palms, dip the palms very lightly in water (which may be warm in very cold weather) at the beginning of each exercise, and continue the exercise until the moisture has completely evaporated. Then at once get into bed. This will occupy from five to ten minutes.

These systematic exercises, done in addition to half an hour's Walking and Breathing exercise, carried out whenever circumstances will permit, supply all that the body needs in the way of exercise. If the Walking-Breathing exercise cannot be done, the Special Breathing exercise described below may be added, but not until you are well confirmed in the general mode of living described in this section.

(f) *Special Breathing Exercise*. — Having done your "Bodyrubbing" exercises, lie flat on the back, head unsupported by pillow, on the bed, if it is quite level; if not, on a rug spread on the floor. Cover the body with some light but warm covering. Let all the muscles relax to the utmost, picturing in imagination the body as a great weight sinking into the floor.

When relaxation is complete, gently draw up the heels, inward towards the buttocks, crossing the legs and letting the knees fall outward, so that, if elasticity of muscle permits, they may lie on floor or bed. Rest the hands on the groins. Close the eyes and strive to put the body out of your thoughts, by picturing a featureless space into which you look. Now inhale very slowly, in the manner already learned, until no more air can enter the body. Then without pause exhale, giving exactly the same time to the act as you gave to the inhalation, until as much air as possible has been expelled from the lungs. At each successive breath extend the time devoted to it until it is double that given to the first — thus supposing the first inhalation, and exhalation occupy ten seconds each, allow a second longer to each

succeeding inhalation and exhalation, until twenty seconds to each is reached. Continue to breathe at that rate for a time, but never for more than ten minutes. Then at once compose yourself to sleep.

Beginners in the practice may find five seconds for the first breath and ten for the longest as much as they can manage without strain; but well-practised persons of pure body may easily extend the longest breath to thirty or forty seconds, or even to one minute.

This exercise is somewhat akin in nature to the Hatha Yoga breathing exercises, of which most students have heard or read something, but of which few have any true understanding. Unlike those exercises, this that I describe is perfectly safe to use, and immensely beneficial, always providing that it is not attempted until the body has first been prepared by some months of careful observance of all the rules of living which I give.

In its practice observe the following precautions. Let the Self be active in its contemplation of whatever it has chosen to concentrate on — an image of open sea or of sky is best. By *activity* I mean be definitely an observer, and do not let what you contemplate absorb you, for to do that will quickly bring transfer of consciousness into the dreaming state. If any strong tendency towards that is perceived, stop the exercise.

Lastly, lie always with head to the north.

(2). *Food and Drink.*

Extreme moderation as to quantity, and extreme simplicity as to quality, in regard to food and drink are the ideals towards which the Learner should aspire. No drastic change of or reduction in the diet to which one is habituated should ever be made, for nothing can result from so doing but disturbance, not merely of body but of emotions and thoughts. Much harm has been done by those ignorant of the law of these matters by preaching uncompromising vegetarianism, total abstinence from alcohol, condiments, tobacco, and even tea and coffee, to persons wholly unprepared for such radical changes.

Ultimately, when we become high Adepts, we shall live on uncooked fruits and milk, or perhaps only water, but while we are but Learners a moderate allowance of meat, and an occasional indulgence in alcohol, will not halt our progress. To seek to eliminate these articles from our dietary is right, and must be done, but it must be done gradually, taking care that there is no violent outraging of the desire of the body for such pabulum. All that is needed to effect dietary adjustments is to apply the rules of Self-examination and Self-questioning taught in other lessons. Desire of certain articles of

food and drink differs only in mode of manifestation from any other desire, and can be dealt with as that is dealt with.

The mere Learner should aim at substituting eggs, cheese, and perhaps fish, for butcher's meat; at eliminating strong condiments and alcoholic drinks; and at replacing white with wholemeal bread. In addition, if circumstances permit, he should strive to reduce the quantity of starchy food consumed, and fill its place with fruit and vegetables. If with this he very gradually reduces quantity eaten to half the usual amount he will have done as much as it is possible and useful to do.

Use of Water. Drink as much water as you conveniently can. Before morning exercise drink a glass of cold water, and another glass, or two, in small quantities at a time during the course of the exercises. Drink at least one glass of water between each meal, and at bedtime. Should you wake during the night, drink another glass.

The relation of diet to the particular grade or phase of Becoming occupied by the Aspirant is a matter of high importance, but one of which only a few know anything. Little can be said of it here, except to draw attention to certain rules governing the mode of living of Candidates in the Ancient Mystery schools:

There were four grades or circles in the Mystery Schools.

Candidates in the first or outer circle, which in the Greek schools appertained to the Mysteries of Dionysos, were permitted the use of flesh foods of certain specified kinds, and of wine.

In the next circle – that of candidates in the Mysteries of Aphrodite – of flesh foods fish only was eaten, but wine was permitted.

In the third circle – that of the devotees of Hermes – no flesh foods were permitted; nothing but uncooked fruits, cooked vegetables, milk, cheese, and eggs. Wine "lightly fermented" might be drunk.

In the Circle of Apollo, the highest grade of the Mysteries, no cooked food; nothing but sun-ripened fruits, green vegetables, unfermented wine, milk, and water might be used.

The intelligent Learner may recognize that to be privileged to eat the food of Apollo one must have entered the Circle of Apollo. For the ignorant man, not yet "accepted" even into the Circle of Dionysos, to attempt to live on the "food of the gods" would be an act which instead of lifting him into Hierophantship would bring certain punishment upon him for his sacrilege.

(3). *Bathing.*

Extreme cleanliness of body is necessary if one would make it an efficient instrument; but cleanliness should be secured, if it is at all

possible to do so, without the excessive use of hot water and soap so common in modern civilized life. Those who live a natural, abstemious life in unpolluted country air need never have recourse to hot water and soap, but those who live in cities must do so, unfortunately.

Nevertheless, if the exercises already described, including the nightly rubbing of the entire body with wet palms, is consistently followed, the number of hot baths with the use of soap may with great advantage be reduced to one a week for women and one a fortnight for men. To the many who make almost a fetish of the hot bath this advice may doubtless seem peculiar, but it has a reason. The normal, active skin secretes a certain oily substance rich in a particular "vitamin", which latter is absorbed into the blood-stream to the great advantage of the individual concerned. But if over-frequent hot baths with use of soap are taken the oil is washed away, and the "vitamin" lost before it can be absorbed.

The feet should have careful attention. The toe-nails should be kept in good order. Before dressing and before retiring dip the soles very lightly in water and dry by vigorous rubbing with the palms of the hands. Better still is it to walk barefoot in wet grass.

(4). Sleep.

Natural man should go to sleep six hours after the highest point of vitality of the day has been reached – in other words about 9 to 10 p.m. He should rise about three hours after the lowest point of the vital tide has been passed – at about 5.30 a.m. to 6 a.m. Obviously it is impossible to observe such hours in our civilized existence, but the Learner should strive to have at least one hour of sleep before midnight, and also to be actively astir three hours before midday. If it is impossible to get to bed before midnight, try to obtain one to two hours of sleep at any time between 4 p.m. and midnight, even in a chair

Let the bed be low, and level, and the pillow low.

Comfortable warmth is essential, but avoid heavy bedclothes.

Sleep with head to the north or east.

In the country, where the air is pure, and population sparse, it is best to sleep at ground level, but in the city an upper chamber is best.

(5). Clothing.

Avoid wearing clothing of wool, or of any animal product except silk, next the skin. It is best to wear no underclothing of any kind. In a climate like that of the British Isles a heavier overcoat in winter should suffice to preserve warmth. The idea that woollen underclothing must be donned with the first frosts of winter is a most harmful delusion. I, who give these lessons, though I passed the greater part of my life in

hot climates, never wear undergarments, and suffer less from cold than the majority of persons who have lived at home all their lives.

But be careful not to make sudden drastic changes in your mode of clothing yourself, any more than you do in adjusting your diet. To do anything of the kind is to fall into the old trap of changing conditions without having first changed your own nature.

(6). *Sex.*

It has already been stated in Lesson VI that diseases and abnormalities of the sex nature are obstacles to the serious practice of Evocation. The same remarks apply to an unnatural sex life of any kind. The subject is one of the highest importance to the Aspirant to the PATH, but it would need a book to itself to expound it satisfactorily. A few brief remarks upon it must, however, be made, in order to dispel certain erroneous ideas which afflict many would-be Occultists, to a greater extent, even, than they afflict the average man.

(1). A completely celibate life, except for a few exceptional persons, is a definite bar to advance beyond the scope of Lesson IV. Particularly is this so in a woman, who, far more often than a man, is celibate through force of circumstances rather than from natural choice.

(2). Chastity is traditionally regarded as essential in an Occultist, but the real meaning of the virtue is wholly misunderstood. Chastity does not mean total abstinence from sex relations any more than true asceticism means total abstinence from food. [– It should be remembered that here, as elsewhere, I speak to the Learner of the life of the Learner, and am not declaring what is or what is not true of the life of the high Adept. — P. G. B. –] Like all other Virtues, it means taking what in the way of experience is strictly demanded by existing conditions, and nothing more. It is a state of the Inner Being — a state wherein there is detachment of Self from the Powers of Being (Lesson IV), together with recognition of the nature of the Field of Experience into which those Powers would lead, or towards which they point: in other words *a state of knowledge of the needs of the Being*.

It is, or it should be, perfectly obvious that the course of the Neophyte is onward towards the True Virtue of Chastity (study Lesson III), but that he has by no means yet attained it. His ignorant attempts to practise that which he imagines it to be can lead to nothing but unbalance of Being.

The "Sex Problem" is a problem only to disordered and unbalanced civilized man, in our civilized conditions. Pseudooccultism makes matters worse by its ignorant attempts to enforce "rules" which

apply to grades of progress far beyond the reach of the average Learner, and which are not in any way understood. The ancient *Ordinances of Manu* were written by wiser men — men who knew that the phase of Householder and Father must precede that of Sage.

Far more harmful than celibacy are any artificial substitutes for normal sexual relationships, although such practices have been openly advocated by certain teachers of Occultism. If such teachers had any genuine occult knowledge, their motives cannot possibly have been those which alone should animate the True Occultist — attainment of conscious union with the SPIRIT which is LIFE.

What sexual abnormalities or unnatural sex habits may be made to do, when accompanied by certain subjective activities not wise to mention, is to rouse psychic powers and faculties into action, or induce mediumistic conditions. Even without any conscious accessory subjective activity, celibacy, and unnatural practices often conduce to mediumship and other undesirable psychic states.

Let the Learner strive diligently to apply the Laws of Life as taught in these lessons, and follow the Path outlined step by step, and he will find his problems losing their power, while peace and harmony arise in their places.

THE LEARNER'S QUESTIONS — Lesson VII

Question A: Are there any records, or other authorities, that may be consulted concerning Druidism and the Ancient Mysteries?

Answer: I do not know. For anything I have said concerning the Druids or the Mysteries I give no authority, for I have none of value to any but to those whose Thought moves on the same Path as my own. Whether what I aver concerning the Druids and the Mysteries be regarded as intuitions of actual truths or as mere empty imaginings matters nothing to the Learner.

Question B: What is the actual difference between Macrocosmic and Microcosmic Consciousness?

Answer: Were man able to exercise the Macrocosmic Consciousness, all life that is now objective to him would become subjective. He would be the essential MAN, and of his Consciousness the Selves of all men would be but aspects.

Question C: Does not Theosophy teach that primeval Man created the Animal kingdom?

Answer: As far as I am aware H. P. Blavatsky taught that Man *preceded* the Animal in the present "round", or world cycle. Her doctrine, occultly understood, is identical with that which I state in the

text of the lesson. It should be obvious to any really intelligent student that Madame Blavatsky's teaching as actually set forth is *exoteric*, not occult. She expressed it in fact in symbolic forms which if taken at their face value, as they would have to be by the enormous majority of her readers, would nevertheless be true analogies of LIFE, as far as those readers could understand LIFE. But she also proved herself a genuine Occultist by choosing a symbolism capable of revealing the real or inner doctrine without a flaw, to those capable of comprehending it. In this lies the difference between her teachings and those of other persons who declare themselves her successors. One of the latter recently declared that early man gave birth to the animals by dropping "spores and debris" from his body over the face of the primordial earth.

Question D: How is it possible to have "*Action without results*"?

Answer: I can but point out that LIFE exists in a state of incessant activity, and yet remains changeless. Result implies change. Within the Sphere which the Adept has completely transcended and transmuted into a Body of Knowledge he has become consciously one with LIFE, and his actions have become identical with LIFE'S activities; these activities constitute his Being, and cannot therefore bring him results or changes.

It is possible to express the conception otherwise by saying that KNOWLEDGE cannot be other than a state of activity, yet the activity does not change KNOWLEDGE into something else. The result of KNOWLEDGE is KNOWLEDGE to him who possesses it.

THE LEARNER'S QUESTIONS MISCELLANEOUS

Question : Is there anything to be gained by a Learner through study of ASTROLOGY?

Answer: Exoteric Astrology, by which I mean divination, character-reading, and the like by means of the stars and other heavenly bodies, cannot advantage a genuine Learner. He has progressed beyond the stage where dabbling in semi-occult arts, one of which astrology is, as a form of experience can have any attraction for him, and he has not yet reached the point whence study with knowledge of the true occult ASTROLOGY becomes possible for him.

Question : Is it possible to read the future from the stars, or in any other way?

Answer: One of Earth's Great Ones when asked a similar question replied: "ALL THAT WAS IS, AND ALL IS THAT IS TO BE." In

LIFE infinite and eternal, its infinite phases, each and all, exist eternally, but they do not so exist in the limited consciousness of man. It is therefore possible to any man who can free his Consciousness from the limitations we call TIME to see past, future, and present as one. Not merely may real study of the stars thus set Self free, but study of the earth, of man himself, of any form or phase of LIFE, may do so also. But if it is meant, do certain stellar and planetary configurations relative to any individual reveal his destiny definitely, the answer, equally definitely, must be that they do not.

The common idea that man is ruled or has his destiny determined by the stars is wrong and obstructive of genuine occult progress. Man rules himself and makes his own destiny. It may be said that the stars (and innumerable other indicatory aspects of life) *reflect* aspects of his Being that condition his Becoming, but that is all. He is not of necessity bound by any of his conditions.

Knowledge of much more than the objective stars and planets is needed to "cast" a true "Horoscope" .

Knowledge of the dates and places of *re-births* is needed even more than is knowledge of those of physical birth. For example, the natal Horoscope becomes null and void in the case of a Learner who passes on into accepted Discipleship.

True Astrology, like true Magic, depends upon knowledge of Macrocosmic and Microcosmic correspondences.

Question : If, as I understand from the lessons, only an embryonic Self functions in the Dream-world, in what way do you account for definitely prophetic dreams, which would seem to be messages from an almost omniscient consciousness?

Answer: Numberless impressions come over from sleeping states into the waking consciousness, but by no means all come from true dreams. The subject is immensely complex and difficult, and to discuss it here would, even if possible, not be useful. Of the genuine prophetic "dream" this may be said, that it does not come from the true dreaming state, but from quite another state. You have learned in the lessons that with the completion of any cycle of experience the Self achieves freedom: before it becomes again involved in another set of conditions there is a *moment* — an interval *not in time*, when it is reunited with the ONE LIFE, and there is relatively omniscient, beholding past and future, cause and effect, all as one. It is from out of those *free states*, of which, it is possible, there may be more than one between going to sleep and waking, that any genuine fore-vision comes.

Question : What is your explanation of National Devas, and similar

Beings of which psychics and others give such circumstantial accounts?

Answer: It is obviously impossible to pronounce upon the vision which others may have had. The psychic, even the adept seer, objectifies a phase of the EVERBECOMING, gives it form and name, but that he interprets its nature correctly is a matter of grave doubt. A nation, a race, a country, a locality is an aspect of Everbecoming Life, and therefore a Being, but is it to be thought that its inner, essential Being – the radiator of the Energies which, associating with the Consciousness of man, cause man to recognize its existence – is a highly evolved entity capable of planning wisely on its behalf, as many writers will have it happens? Where do we find a race or a nation acting as a genuine Self-directing unit, as does the least developed man? The nearest thing to a united consciousness exhibited by a body of human beings is the Mob Consciousness, and to what evolutionary level does that belong?

The key to understanding of this matter has already been given in the answer to your question concerning the "Spiritual Being" of the Planet. "Father, Mother, and Son" exist everywhere, in every phase of LIFE, yet equally are illusions of limited Consciousness to the Eye of the ONE LIFE.

Question : When you speak of "Hermetic Schools" or "Hermetic Wisdom," do you refer to the medieval Alchemists, Qabalists, Rosicrucians, and others, followers of the so-called "Western Tradition" which often call themselves Hermetic?

Answer: I refer to none of these, but to the much older, now lost or buried, Mystery Schools of the ancient Mediterranean world, of which Chaldea and Egypt are fragments. The "schools" to which you refer are all offshoots of this older school, though perhaps with little knowledge of their origin.

Question : Can you say what the true meaning of the "Black Path", and of the existence of the Black Magician, may be?

Answer: The truth about these matters are occult secrets which are beyond the scope of these lessons, and outside the sphere of my own knowledge. It is well for the Learner to recognize this, and not to concern himself with speculations that can bring him no profit. Let it be said that the ordinary man, or the Neophyte, cannot become a Black Magician any more than he can become a White Adept. Not until he is a fully accepted Disciple can he choose his Path. When he does choose, his choice is made by a Spiritual Consciousness fully awakened.

The Neophyte may stray into various blind-alleys, which may

with a certain justice be called offshoots of the Black Path, but from out of these the Law compels him to turn, and with heavy labour climb back to the Threshold, for not until he has crossed it can he choose his way.

Question: Concentration and Meditation, which are leading features of all occult systems, are not discussed in your lessons. Do you disapprove of their practice?

Answer: The outstanding error of Learners, in whom it is excusable, and of many teachers, who teach without wisdom, is that they associate Occultism with practices rather than with PRACTICE. They imagine that the performance of certain exercises and the pursuance of certain studies constitute the Occult Way, instead of recognizing it as the *Art of Living*. Concentration and Meditation are not exercises forming features of the Occult Way; *the Occult Way is the Way of Concentration and Meditation*. That Way is the WAY OF LIFE itself. CONSCIOUSNESS becomes *concentrated* — wholly absorbed in SUBSTANCE, only to withdraw again from it into ever-expanding KNOWLEDGE bringing ever-widening FREEDOM; and it is this Freedom-bringing Knowledge which is sought in true Meditation.

I teach no exercises in Concentration and Meditation, but in every lesson I teach the Life of Concentration and Meditation.

It was the hope of the great man whose life and whose will inspired and compelled the writing of these lessons that they would open the eyes of at least a few to the truth that the secret of life is discovered by LIVING with LIFE, and that they would turn those few from their fruitless chase after the many phantom *reflections* of the LIGHT, which gleam clear, and apparently near, in this book and in that, in one teacher and in another. Often, warningly and approvingly, he would quote the sonorous words in which a fellow poet and fellow sage of the Orient contrasted his own Way with the Way of his pupil. Consider them and *meditate* upon them, for they reveal the Way of Concentration and Meditation:

*“He saw the lightning in the East, and longed for the East,
had he seen it in the West he would have longed for the West;
but I, seeking only the Lightning and its Glory,
care nothing for the Quarters of the Earth.”*